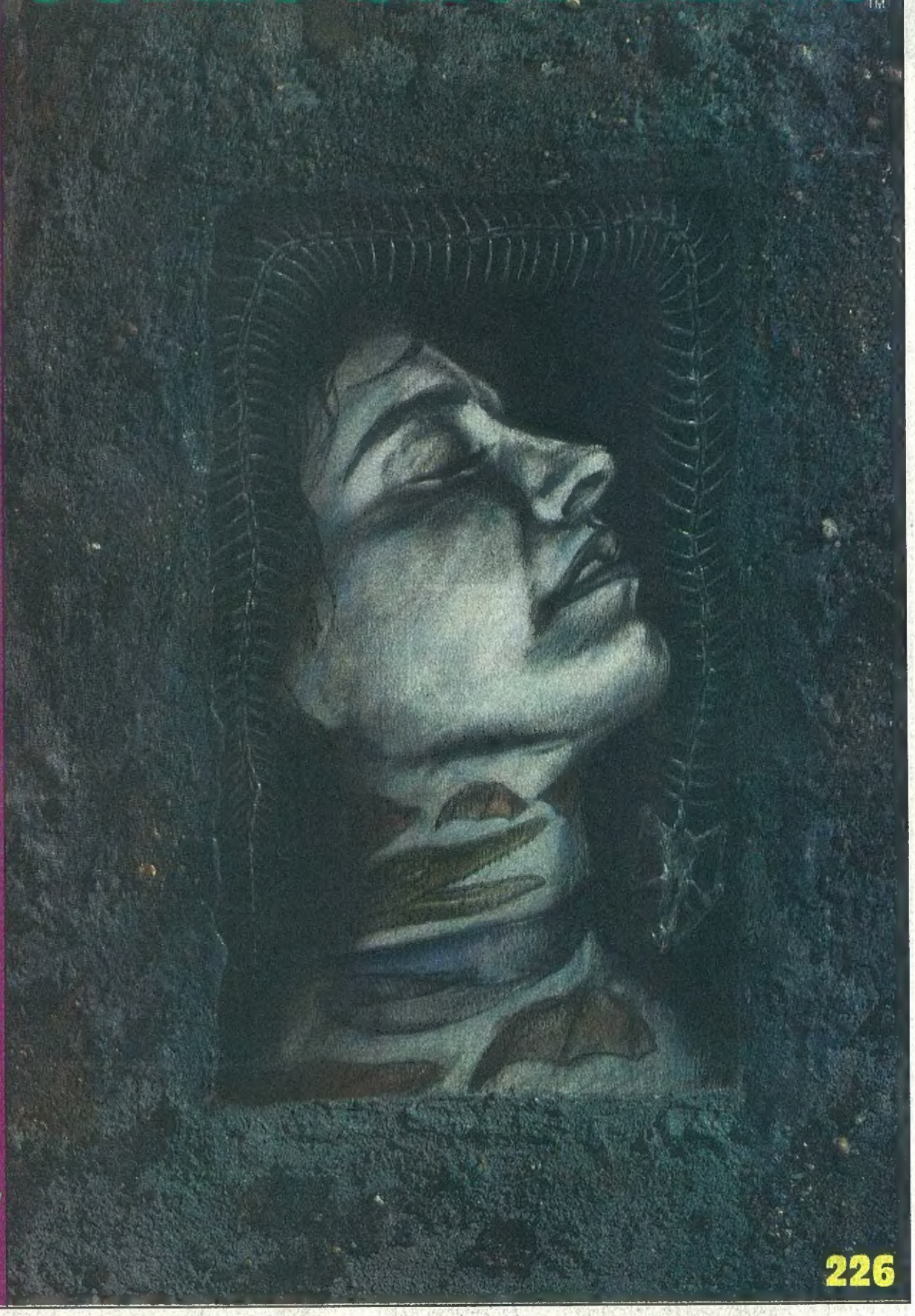
SCORCHED EARTH REVIEWS

COMIC SHOP NEWS™



Scorched Earth ™ & ©1991 Gentile & Geyden, ARR.

You Gotta Have Heart!

Ghost Rider, Wolverine, and Punisher have all met one another in various crossover storylines--but prior to the upcoming bookshelf-format one-shot ***Hearts Darkness***, the trio had never appeared in any comic book at the same time.

Hearts of Darkness brings each hero to a secluded place known as Christ's Crown. Ghost Rider, Wolverine, and Punisher have each been told in a letter that his greatest mystery will be revealed to him there. For the Punisher, this means that he will discover the whole story behind his family's death; for Ghost Rider, it means that he will at last know who--or what--he really is; and for Wolverine, it means that the truth behind his transformation into a claw-wielding hero will be unveiled.

Once the heroes arrive at Christ's Crown and meet the author of those letters, Blackheart, they discover that he has his own agenda: he intends for the trio of heroes to fight Blackheart's father, Mephisto!

Hearts of Darkness is written by Howard Mackie, the series writer for ***Ghost Rider***. The pencil art is supplied by John Romita Jr., who has managed to squeeze this one-shot in around his work on the Daredevil graphic novel with Frank Miller; Punisher fans can think of it as a "warm-up" for JR Jr.'s upcoming stint as artist on the new third Punisher title set to debut in 1992. Klaus Janson, acclaimed inker of ***Daredevil*** and ***Dark Knight,*** handles the inking honors for ***Hearts of Darkness.***

Hearts of Darkness, a 48-page bookshelf-format one-shot priced at $4.95, is scheduled for December 10th release.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

Scorched Earth Offers a Hopi-ful Look at the Future

The father has contributed greatly to the destruction of the Earth's environment. The son has the potential to undo his father's tampering and save the planet. And shadowy agents for different organizations are ready to throw a monkey-wrench in the gears of both men's plans...

Scorched Earth can be described as an environmental parable--but perhaps it's best not to describe it as such, since that might lead fans to wrongly conclude that this isn't a science-fictional suspense story filled with mystical overtones.

Scorched Earth is the story of Eliot Godwin, industrial tycoon and inventor of the Super Industrial City complexes that many feel have contributed to widespread toxic pollution. It's also the story of his son, Nigel Godwin, who has developed a machine that detoxified the atmosphere by using gravitational fields to create immense rainstorms that eventually cleanse the environment. Nigel Godwin may never have a chance to see his theories put to practical use, though, because the government sees a potential weapon in Godwin's device--and they want to control the development of that weapon.

Scorched Earth began as artist Michael Gaydos' senior thesis at the Cleveland Institute of Art & Design; he and writer John C. Gentile polished the concept for Tundra and turned it into a six-issue miniseries. ***Scorched Earth #3***, a full-color prestige-format comic scheduled for October release, is priced at $3.95.

by WAYNE LEE

The Young and the Restless

Young Indiana Jones Comes to Comics

With youth comes a restless desire for adventure and excitement--but when you're talking about a youth named Indiana Jones, you're talking about adventure with a capital A. This February, Indy's many fans will be able to enjoy his youthful exploits both on television and in comics when Dark Horse simultaneously releases ***The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles #1,*** which adapts the first ABC ***Young Indiana Jones*** movie-of-the-week.

The first storyline is set in the deserts of Egypt, where the young Indiana Jones meets Lawrence of Arabia. This film sets the tone for the series, with future storylines mixing exotic adventure with other real-life characters and settings. Fans will be able to see Indiana Jones riding with Pancho Villa in Mexico (maybe he can find out what happened to Ambrose Bierce...), on safari with Teddy Roosevelt in Africa, and seeing the horrors of war at Verdun. Through this series, fans will be able to see how the young Henry Jones Jr. grew up to become Indiana Jones, the archeologist-adventurer.

The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles, produced for ABC by Lucasfilm, Ltd., will feature not one but three Indiana Jones. One actor will play the elderly Indiana Jones, who appears in the frame sequences of the stories; a second actor will play the eight-year-old Indiana Jones; and a third actor will play the seventeen-year-old Indiana Jones. The series will begin with a two-hour movie-of-the-week and then will continue as a series of weekly adventures, with most stories appearing as two-parters on two consecutive weeks.

The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles comic book series is written and illustrated by Dan Barry, a veteran comics creator who worked on the ***Flash Gordon*** comic strip for many years. Barry was the artist for the first Dark Horse Indiana Jones series, ***Indiana Jones: The Fate of Atlantis.***

The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles #1, a $2.50 comic book, is scheduled for February 1992 release. Dark Horse will continue to publish Indiana Jones in limited series, graphic novels, and one-shots as well.

by KIM B. PEARSON

Malibu Graphics Eager For Youngblood

Rob Liefeld first attracted fan attention at DC with his work on the ***Hawk and Dove*** miniseries beginning in 1988. After that, he helped revamp the ***New Mutants*** for Marvel, transforming them into ***X-Force***--and creating one of the best-selling comics in history. In 1992, Liefeld plies his magic again, this time for Malibu Graphics, with the creation of the new superhero team ***Youngblood.***

"***Youngblood*** is a concept that's been around for a long time, since I was a kid," Liefeld said. "They're a government group of 'super operatives.' The concept is a realistic approach to superheroes; this is a world in which they're the big celebrities. These characters draw big paychecks, they have a business manager, but they can't do product endorsements--even though some companies would love to have them plugging their products! There are different levels of this group; some levels are like the CIA, some are like the FBI, while some exist for nothing more than PR."

"We were the first publisher to sign Rob to a contract," Dave Olbrich, publisher of Malibu Graphics (parent company of Adventure, Arcel, Eternity, and Platinum). "He did a couple of covers for ***Ex-Mutants*** a while back, and we signed him to a contract for this same concept, as a matter of fact. Nothing came of it then, but now it's finally coming about."

Youngblood came about after Rob Liefeld negotiated with DC to do a new ***Teen Titans*** book; those plans fell through, but Rob found that many of the ideas he had developed for that proposed series fit in quite well with the already-existing ***Youngblood*** concept. "I was originally going to do ***Youngblood*** in 1985," Liefeld said. "The first concept was originally developed for Megaton. Then I began to put it together for Malibu; I actually finished about fifteen pages of it; maybe someday it'll see print in a special package. The new ***Youngblood*** isn't exactly the same as the old book, though; I've been able to use a lot of new ideas from the proposed ***Titans*** project."

Liefeld admits that one of the main reasons he came to Malibu with the project was a desire to totally control his creation. Olbrich confirms that ***Youngblood*** is *totally* Liefeld's book. "He owns it. He didn't want to be a part of a conglomeration," Olbrich said. "He's overseeing all steps of the book's production to make sure it's exactly what he wants. He came to Malibu because he wants to support the direct market; he also knows that we have the contacts to help him with merchandising and licensing. ***Youngblood*** is pure Liefeld superhero excitement, though; he knows how to give the fans the sort of stories they want." Liefeld and Malibu agreed that the new ***Youngblood*** limited series would be marketed under the Image Comics name.

"I think of myself as a sort of Joel Silver of comics," Liefeld said. "When you go to see a Joel Silver movie, you know what you're going to get; every movie is, to a degree, the same in that each has the same feel. There won't be any tricks with the first issue to boost sales; I'm just creating good comics here. I'm doing a team book because I like super-teams."

If ***Youngblood*** is successful (is there any doubt?), Liefeld has plans to spin off a new book, ***Brigade,*** featuring a sister team to Youngblood. This new series will be created by Marat Mychaels, a talented newcomer who has star potential, according to Liefeld.

Youngblood #1 will debut in February, kicking off the three-issue full-color monthly miniseries. Both Malibu and Liefeld are confident that this won't be the only appearance of Youngblood, though.

A month before Youngblood debuts, Malibu will publish (under the Adventure Comics imprint) ***Extreme: The Art of Rob Liefeld.*** This 72-page book (64 pages in black and white, 8 pages in full color) will feature a look at Rob's art, a new interview, a comprehensive checklist of his published work, a full-color partial wrap-around cover, a four-page ***Youngblood*** preview, and two trading cards from the six-card Youngblood set. ***Extreme*** will be perfect-bound with a foil-embossed front cover; the book will be reasonably priced at $4.95.

Does this mean that Rob Liefeld is leaving the fan-favorite ***X-Force*** title? Not at all! "I'll continue to do ***X-Force*** each month," Liefeld stressed. "In fact, I also have a four-issue Cable miniseries coming up next spring, subtitled ***Highlords.*** This series will answer a lot of questions about Cable, and bring up even more. ***Highlords*** should begin around ***X-Force #8*** or ***#9.***"

by BRETT BROOKS
& CLIFF BIGGERS

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QUICKSHOTS

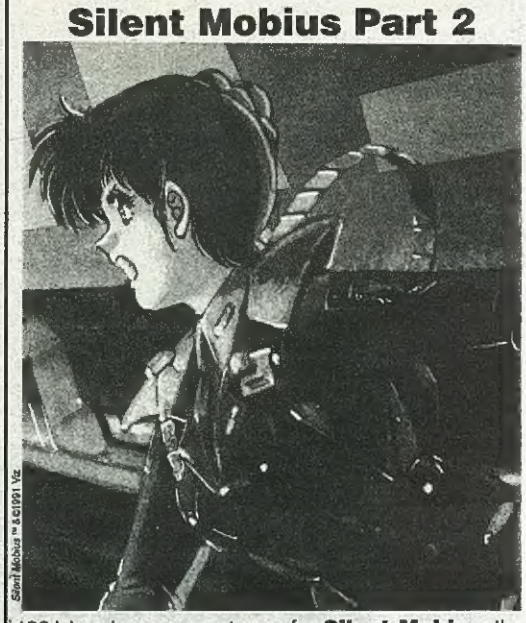
Malibu Goes Ape For Tarzan

Tarzan of the Apes, the classic creation of Edgar Rice Burroughs, returns to comics in the spring of 1992; this time, Malibu Graphics will be the publisher of the new **Tarzan** series. "**Tarzan** is being developed for us by Insight Studios. **Tarzan** will begin as a six-issue full-color miniseries written by Mark Wheatley, pencilled by Neil Vokes, and inked by Marc Hempel; Brian Bolland is illustrating the poster we'll be using to promote the release," Dave Olbrich, Malibu publisher, said. After the initial miniseries is completed, Malibu has plans for future Tarzan graphic novels, one-shots, and limited series. Malibu has also made arrangements for foreign distribution for its **Tarzan** projects to guarantee the books the widest possible audience.

Tundra Pulls the Wraps Off 20 Nude Dancers 20 Year Two

Mark Martin's **20 Nude Dancers 20** is consistently one of the most entertaining features in the pages of the **Comics Buyer's Guide;** every other week, creator Mark Martin pokes fun at comic traditions, fandom, and whatever else tickles his fancy. This December, Tundra will collect the second year's worth of Martin's full-page strips into a single 40-page volume entitled (appropriately enough) **20 Nude Dancers 20 Year Two.** Last year's volume, printed in a somewhat unwieldy oversized format, created a storage problem for fans who couldn't figure out exactly how to store the book in good shape; this year, Tundra has listened to the strip's fans and has redesigned the collection as a magazine printed on high-quality text stock. **20 Nude Dancers 20 Year Two,** a December

Viz Sounds Off About Silent Mobius Part 2



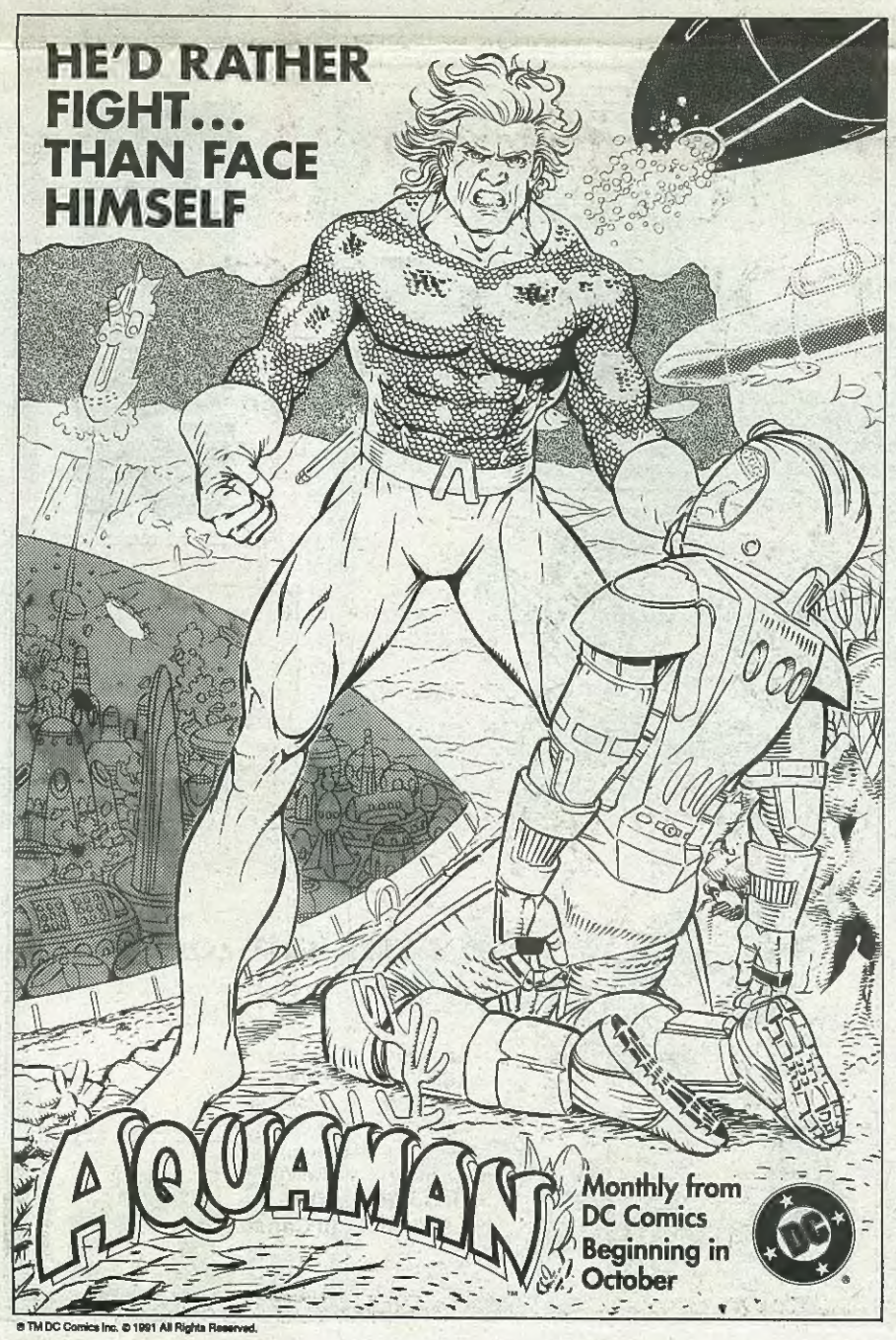
1991 has been a great year for **Silent Mobius**, the series about high-tech "ghostbusters" in a near-future Tokyo: first, the full-color American comic book kicked off its run this past summer, then the animated film was released in Japan on August 17th, produced in conjunction with **Silent Mobius** creator *Kia Asamiya*. With **Silent Mobius** so hot right now, Viz isn't going to frustrate the series' many fans by letting **Silent Mobius** go on hiatus at the completion of the first series--no way! **Silent Mobius Part Two** is scheduled to begin from Viz early this winter, just a month after the first storyline ends. Just like the first series, **Silent Mobius Part Two** will contain forty pages of story and art for $4.95. *Jim Hudnall,* writer of **The Psycho** for DC, is handling the English scripts for the series. The five-issue miniseries is scheduled to debut in late December.

Dread the Future, Dread the Past...

Every day, the news media bring us a different vision of life in the future, but every vision seems to have one thing in common: they're all pretty grim. In Dreadlands, a new four-issue limited series written by Andy Lanning and Steve White and illustrated by Phil Gascoine, readers are presented with a future in which most people live in high-tech underground cities, safe from the many threats found on the surface world. When surface-dwelling nomadic hunters invade the city, though, a group of scientists and military personnel have to abandon their outpost by the only means available to them: time travel. If you're at all familiar with the cliché "out of the frying pan and into the fire," then you can predict that the past is scarcely better for the escapees than their own time was. Trapped on a prehistoric earth populated by dinosaurs, the humans find that their chances for survival are pretty grim--but they get even grimmer when an alien race shows up!... (Gee, maybe these guys know the aliens who are threatening the earth over in DC's **Armageddon: Alien Agenda** limited series...) Dreadlands, a high-impact action adventure four-issue limited series priced at $3.95 per issue, is scheduled to debut on November 28th.

An Annual Event

When the British do an annual, they do it right, as you'll see in the **Judge Dredd Yearbook 1992** and the **2000 A.D. Yearbook 1992.** These 96-page volumes each feature double-gatefold covers with full color interiors and 96 pages of both new and reprint material, all presented on high-quality stock. The **1992 Judge Dredd Yearbook** features all-new stories *by Wagner, Power, Millar Allen, Tolputt, Tomlinson, Yeowell, Senior,* and more; the **2000 A.D. Yearbook 1992** features both new and reprint stories by *Wagner, Angus, Butcher, Hancock, Kinnedy, Mills, Fabry,* and more. Each $12 yearbook is being made available in America in very limited quantities, so reserve a copy as soon as possible.



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VANITAS

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AND
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JON J MUTH

TUNDRA PUBLISHING LTD.

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48-pages, full-color cover with 16-page color interior—$3.95

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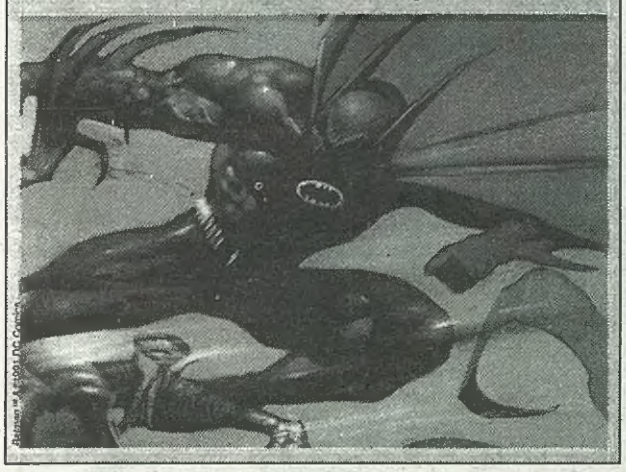
A Batman Christmas

Batman fans will find no shortage of publications spotlighting the Darknight Detective this winter. Just in time for the holiday season, DC is collecting all three Batman: The Dailies trade paperbacks into one 500+ page hardcover. Handsomely slipcased and featuring new cover art by *Pete Poplaski*, **Batman: The Dailies Hardcover Limited Edition** will be produced in a print run of only 5500 copes; priced at $60, the book is scheduled for December 12th release. At the same time, DC is releasing two different **Batman Hologram Buttons**, featuring the Batman and Joker holograms used on the covers of **Robin II: the Joker's Wild** #2 and #3. The hologram buttons are priced at $2 each. A week later, **Batman: Blind Justice** reprints the 160-page storyline by Sam Hamm and Denys Cowan that originally appeared in **Detective #598-600**. This marks Hamm's only comics work thus far (he was also the author for the Batman film screenplay). **Batman: Blind Justice** is priced at $7.50. Add these to the already-announced **Batman: Elseworlds** projects and the **Batman/Judge Dredd** and **Batman/Predator** crossovers, and you can see that Batman fans will have plenty to read on those cold winter nights...



An Eye For An Eye--and a Trade Paperback For a Popular Illustrator...

Jim Lee is This Year's Artist, but he's been around for a bit longer than his **X-Men** fans might realize; Lee's first success was on the first issues of **Punisher War Journal.** Since many of Lee's legion of fans didn't see that series the first time around, Marvel is collecting the first three issues into an eighty-page special, **Punisher: An Eye For An Eye.** The volume also adds a new interview with Jim Lee and the author of the stories, *Carl Potts*. Lee has created a new cover for the book, so you don't have to worry about it blending in with the other books on the racks! **Punisher: An Eye For An Eye,** priced at $9.95, is slated for December 12th release.

Here's an Agent Who Knows How to Say Uncle

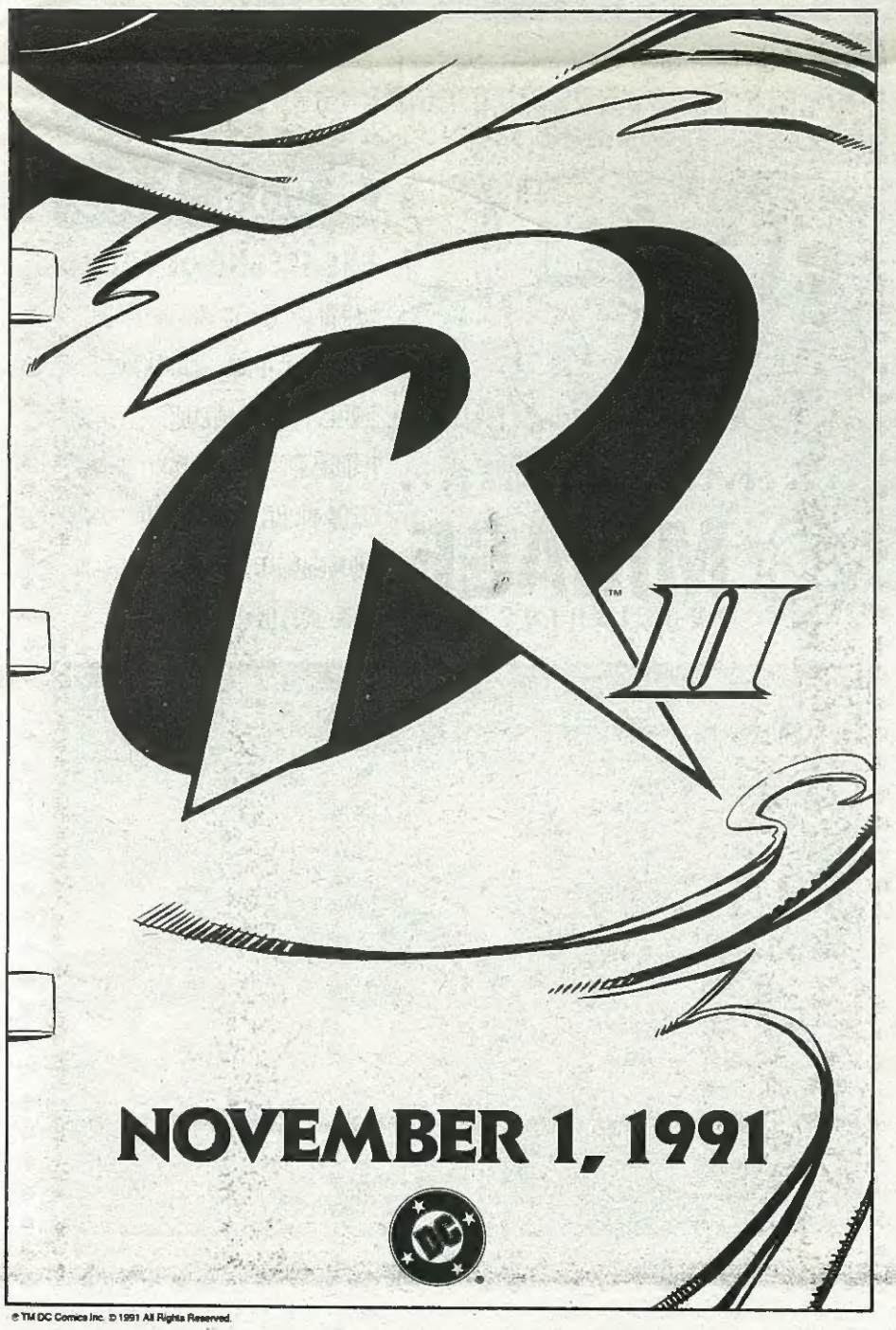
Here's the good news: **James Bond Jr.** isn't what you might suspect (thankfully). Instead, it's the story of James Bond's nephew, who follows the family tradition of getting himself caught up in one exploit after another. **James Bond Jr.** is already the star of his own animated series; in November, he becomes the star of his own comic book as well, courtesy of Marvel. *Cal Hamilton* and *Mario Capaldi* are the creative team for the new series, which debuts on November 29th.

A Year To Remember

The end of the year is approaching--and with it, the latest volume in Marvel's **Year In Review** series. This year, Marvel expands its traditional format to include spoofs of the **Weekly World News** and a take-off on the popular **Spy** magazine feature Separated at Birth. As always, the magazine includes the many retrospective features fans have come to expect, features such as the Best and Worst Dressed List, Loose Lips, Births and Deaths, and those wacky ads for such products as Ghost Rider Detergent, She-Hulk Trash Bags, and the Tony Stark Car. *Art Adams* supplies the cover for the **1991 Marvel Year In Review;** look for the $3.95 magazine on December 19th.

The Dark Knights Meets the Death Knight

Deathstroke the Terminator #7, featuring part two of the four-part "City of Assassins storyline, also features a special guest whose presence should stir up a great deal of fan interest. Batman appears in this issue, confronting Deathstroke about a mob witness Deathstroke has taken into "protective custody" to save him from a hidden police assassin. *Marv Wolfman, Steve Erwin,* and *Willie Blyberg* present this eventful meeting on December 12th; don't miss it!



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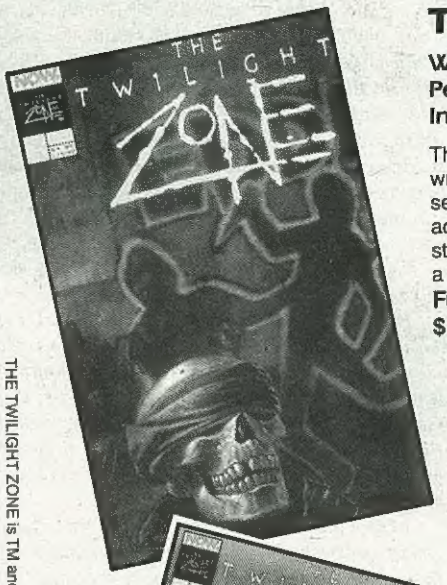

THE TWILIGHT ZONE #2
Written by J. Michael Straczynski
Penciled by Todd Fox
Inked by Enrique Villagran

This story is written by one of the writers of THE TWILIGHT ZONE TV series and illustrated by the highly acclaimed art team of ALIAS:! Our story is a sociological thriller involving a writer who thinks he has seen it all.
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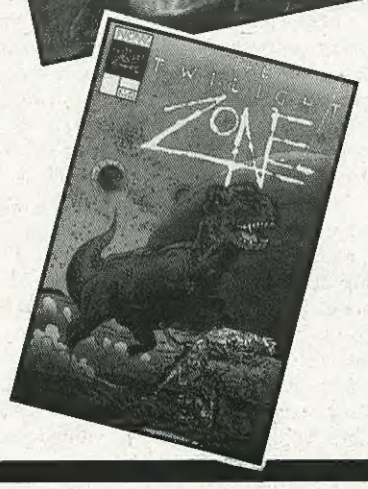

THE TWILIGHT ZONE #3
Written by Tony Caputo
Illustrated by Norm Dwyer

After decades of speculation, research, and bizarre science fiction stories, humankind finally meets an extraterrestrial. It's not at all what they expected, because they are in... the Twilight Zone.
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Give & Take by Cliff Biggers & Brett Brooks

Each month, Cliff Biggers (in plain type) and *Brett Brooks (in italic type)* take a look at a few choice comics scheduled for release within the next month. Publishers interested in having their books considered for review should send copies to ***CSN Give and Take, 2339 Milstead Circle, Marietta GA 30066.*** We'd prefer receiving copies of the books at least thirty days before they're supposed to reach comic shops. Enough business; now let's talk comics.

Aliens: Genocide

In ***Aliens: Earth War,*** the Aliens came here en masse to terrorize our planet; it's only fair that in Dark Horse's newest Aliens miniseries, ***Aliens: Genocide,*** an assault group from Earth should head for the Aliens' homeworld to return the favor.

Aliens: Genocide could very easily have become nothing more than a revenge-is-sweet storyline; most readers of the Aliens limited series would have been perfectly satisfied to see just such a storyline. It is to John Arcudi's credit that he has given the readers a far more complicated--and far more entertaining story than that.

Aliens: Genocide deals with two different struggles. First, there is the struggle among the Aliens themselves, a struggle to select a single dominant queen. The more deadly struggle, though, comes when an elite assault group from Earth heads to the homeworld to secure a supply of royal jelly necessary for a performance-enhancing drug that greatly enhances human strength and endurance.

Daniel Grant, American billionaire-entrepreneur, has developed a new drug, Xen-Zip; in its original formulation, the drug used royal jelly (referred to by Grant as "Alien goo") as a primary ingredient to enhance physical abilities. Grant's company, Neo-Pharm, has tried to replace its now-depleted supply of "Alien goo" with chemical synthetics--but that has resulted in self-destructive, Hulkish berserkers who must be killed to be stopped. It's no surprise that the Army likes this formulation even better than the original--but Grant convinces them that it is in everyone's best interest for him to send a team to the homeworld to secure a new supply of "Alien goo." After all, while the military may like unfeeling berserker killers, the public prefers a...shall we say less *aggressive?*... enhancement?...

The character of Daniel Grant seems very familiar to me, almost as if we could find him in our own society, and right away he makes a very compelling villain. He practically oozes with his own slime, enough so that the Aliens take a back seat. The story also touches on the use of drugs and the idea of designer drugs in today's society; this isn't to say that the book tries to drive a message of "just say no" down the readers throat, but rather that Arcudi doesn't shy away from the subject, or try to preach about it--he presents a balanced, realistic, and somewhat frightening outlook towards the subject of drug use and abuse. None of the characters are beyond the reach of this fact, and none of them are perfect in their reactions.

Aliens: Genocide introduces a new soldier, Alex Lee, who is a fitting replacement for Ripley; like Ripley, she is self-assured, capable, and determined. And like Ripley, she has a foil on her mission--and in this case, her foil is Daniel Grant himself, who is accompanying the team to Homeworld to guarantee his investment.

Arcudi has turned in a stellar script for ***Aliens: Genocide***; his story moves well, and the cinematic-styled cuts from Homeworld to Earth help accent the "genocide" occurring in both settings. Even though Dark Horse's various ***Aliens*** miniseries have always been blessed with outstanding artwork, these have been primarily writers' series--that is, it's the strong plots that draw readers back. Arcudi follows Mark Verheiden's tradition well; he has crafted a story that would make a stunning film, although it would be so prohibitively expensive that it most likely could only be done in comics form.

Damon Willis and Karl Story handle the art honors for the series, and their linework is suitably brutal and dynamic. I don't envy the artists on this series; they have to illustrate literally hundreds of Aliens in these four issues--and let's face it, these critters aren't easy to illustrate!...

*Some of the effects that Willis tries to pull off are very ambitious. His portrayal of the Alien homeworld and all the different varieties of Aliens that inhabit the world are fascinating to look at; he crates the clear predator species and the seemingly more passive prey with only some background illustrations. I suspect that the ecology of the Alien homeworld is something that the readers of the **Aliens: Genocide** mini-series can look forward to in the future issues. The idea is intriguing enough, and I feel that Arcudi can pull it off successfully. I have enjoyed all of the **Aliens** limited series , and **Aliens: Genocide** is no exception.*

Aliens: Genocide won't disappoint any fans who enjoyed the earlier ***Aliens*** limited series; furthermore, science fiction fans will enjoy the intriguing future world Arcudi creates in this series, which is sufficiently self-contained that even those who have never read an Aliens limited series can enjoy this one.

Now to change gears somewhat, let's review something else based on a series of successful films.

Bill and Ted's Excellent Comic Book *is being done by Evan Dorkin for Marvel Comics. Evan is the same person who did **Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey** (the comics adaptation, that is), **Predator: Big Game,** and **Pirate Corp$.** All I have to say is that **Bill and Ted's Excellent Comic Book** is one of the most thoughtfully plotted, carefully crafted, and wonderful to read comics in a long time.*

I know that sounds strange, but it's true. Evan Dorkin obviously thought out the plot for this comic in great detail, and then--this may be the important part--he had fun with it. That's right, fun. He doesn't take the book too seriously, yet he doesn't do stories that go nowhere. This book has a plot. A stronger plot than most of the other comics being published today!

Dorkin has packed a lot of plot in this series, but what pleases me the most is that the series doesn't embarrass its readers with awkwardly-written hip dialogue. Remember The Teen Titans from about 1968, when it was obvious that this was a comic book about teenagers written by a man whose total knowledge of teen jargon came from television? Well, Dorkin doesn't do that--as exaggerated as the Bill & Ted dialogue is, it's still believable (believably dumb, but believable). The story is as zany as the films--but in a comic, throwaway lines work much much better because

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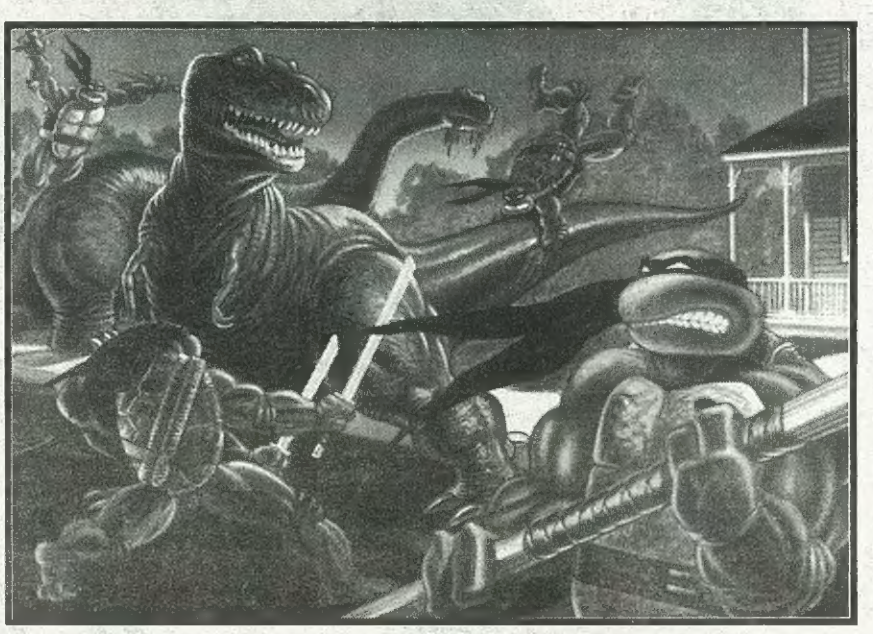


TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES ® and © 1991 MIRAGE STUDIOS

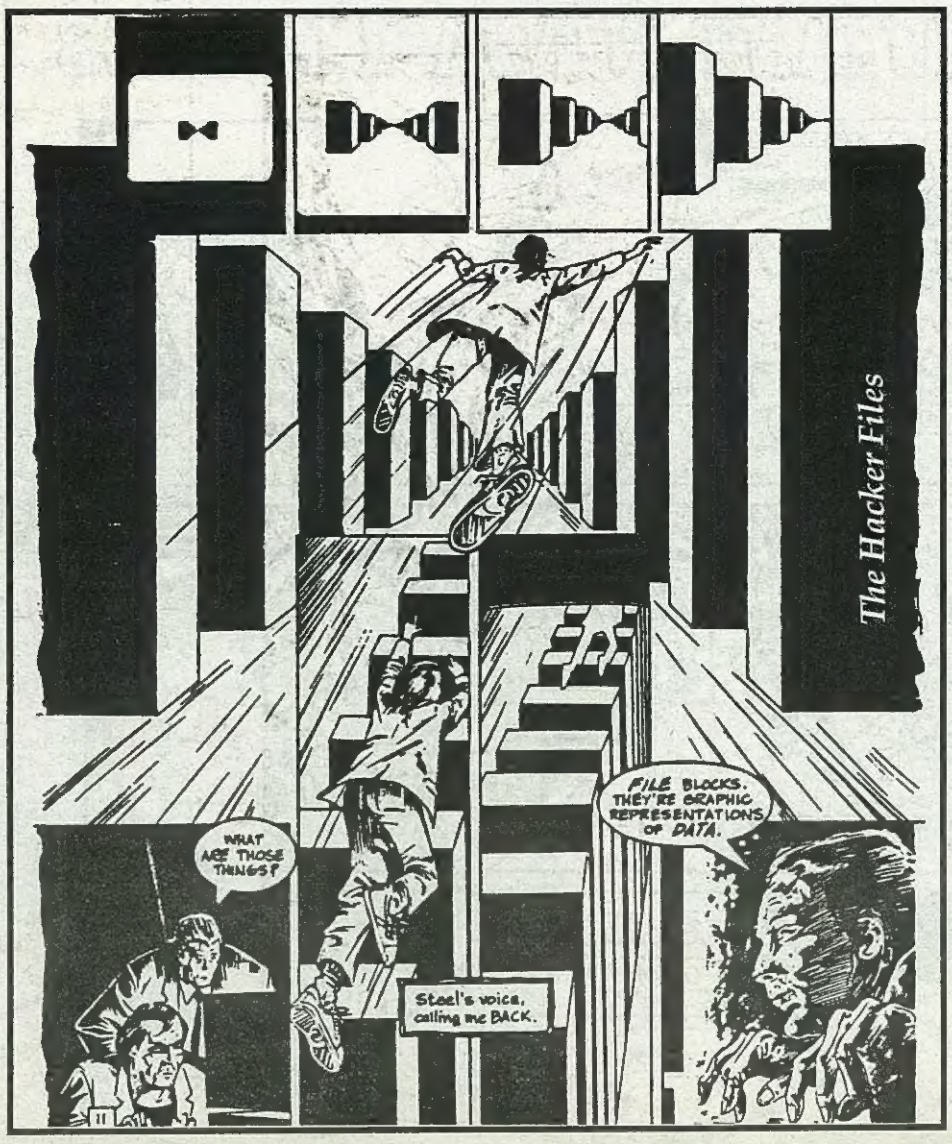
the reader can take them in a second or third time if he wishes, whereas in the film, some of them zing past before you've finished laughing at the previous line.

The first issue picks up right where the second film leaves off. Bill and Ted are now married to the fabulous-princess-babes, but no one was there to see the marriage, so they decide to do it all over again, just so there are a few witnesses this time. Well, after using the words witnesses and time in the same sentence, do you sense a possible direction for this? That's right, all sorts of famous figure history and the future show up to help these two most totally righteous dudes marry their true loves. Dorkin works in characters from both films, and even goes so far as to give some of them personalities that they were lacking in the films. Basically, everything in the book is centered around one big party, but Dorkin makes sure that there are enough things happening at this party to keep even the most picky of readers happy.

One coincidence between ***Aliens: Genocide*** *and* ***Bill and Ted's Excellent Comic Book*** *is the detail of the art. Every panel of Bill and Ted's comic is so packed full of information and action that it can take quite a long time to study everything that is going on. The art is by Dorkin and inker Stephen DeStefano ('Mazing Man) who brings out al of the details in Dorkin's pencils with wonderful clarity and depth. Mondo boffo, dudes!*

Oh, by the way, have I mentioned that the comic is funny? No? I guess I've just been so caught-up in the fact that this was a well written, well drawn comic that I forgot to mention that it is truly funny. Subtle humor side-by-side with in-your-face gags. You laugh, most-well-read-comic-fan dudes.

Bill and Ted's Excellent Comic Book*...it actually lives up to its name.*


The Hacker Files
WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?
FILE BLOCKS. THEY'RE GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DATA.
Steel's voice, calling me BACK.

The Hacker Files does for technology what ***Hellblazer*** does for the occult.

That's a sweeping--and rather enigmatic--statement, but I maintain that it's true. Just as ***Hellblazer*** was the most successful comic book series to update the disquieting macabre of the occult into a stylish, hard-edged modern series, ***The Hacker Files*** has the promise to be the first series to effectively combine realistically-presented state-of-the-art computer technology and superheroes. And that's quite an accomplishment in a field where computers are either convenient personifications of *deus ex machina*, artificially-intelligent menaces, or technobabble backgrounds for cyberpunk quasi-mysticism.

Jack Marshall is a comics-fan's fantasy: he's a normal man in a world of superheroes--but he's an inexpendable part of that world, for his computer expertise makes him as important as any costumed adventurer. Jack Marshall was one of the designers of the Digatronix Computer that links the DC Universe--and he knows more about it than any living human being. So when a computer virus creates potentially disastrous computer problems that not even Digatronix can correct--problems that threaten the future of mankind, since the infected computers include the Pentagon's systems--Jack Marshall is called in. No matter how much the government hates the iconoclastic Marshall, they hate a potential earth-destroying holocaust even more...

One of the things that makes ***The Hacker Files*** *so entertaining is the sense of realism that lies behind it. THis book has no unbelievable super-villains, Marshall doesn't seem to possess an super-abilities, he is just an extraordinarily capable computer programmer that has a strange set of quirks about him. THe one book that this reminded me of that you haven't mentioned is the Shadow; I will maintain that the Hacker Files is an effect modern updating of the concepts of the Shadow. Jack Marshall is fighting a war against injustice (albeit in his own unique fashion) and he uses a complex, tightly knit band of agents to help him in his work--without letting others know that they are helping him. Sure he doesn't have any catchy sayings--at least not yet--and he doesn't brandish any sort of firearm, but I do think that he has other weapons of choice. In Jack Marshall's hands, a computer becomes a weapon for justice, and Marshall himself becomes a fearful creature of the computer's*

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driven to rid the streets of evil
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PREVIEWS & REVIEWS

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™
HER EYES ARE LIKE TWIN POOLS...
I FEEL A TUGGING AT MY MIND...
AS SHE PULLS ME IN.
10-14
CREATORS SYNDICATE © 1991 MIRAGE STUDIOS
I BLINK ONCE AND I'M PULLED INTO HER DEPTHS..
SUN-WARMED ANCESTRAL FLESH COOLING IN CLEAN GLACIAL POOLS...
BLINK TWICE AND TASTE
10-15
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I'M SHARING HER RACE-MIND...
REMEMBERING
THE ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP OF THE FIRST LONG-HAIRS...
TWIN SHADOWS FLEEING DARK WHITE HATRED...
10-16
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LOCKED WITHIN...
SEEKING SAFETY
UNDERGROUND...
AND THEN...
10-17
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HER RACE-MIND LEAPS FORWARD
AND THEN...
I AM CONCEIVED ANEW
I AM HER.
10-18
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10-19
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night--an unseen avenger working through the magic of electronics.

The difference between The Shadow and Jack Marshall, though, is that The Shadow is vengeance-driven; he desires to punish the guilty and to avenge the innocent. Jack Marshall seems much more driven by intellectual curiosity; he views his mission as a challenge, and he approaches it with a cold curiosity and a competitive determination to prove that he's the best at what he does. And, of course, the Shadow very much represented the dark side of the status quo, fighting to maintain society as it operated in his time; Jack Marshall has rejected many of the standards of the society in which he operates, but he continues to "play the game" because it intrigues him.

Writer-creator Lewis Shiner has set ***The Hacker Files*** in the DC Universe, so familiar characters are bound to appear in this series. Sarge Steel plays a role in the first four-part story, and it's likely that other DC heroes will show up in future story arcs. Shiner's knowledge of computer systems and programming enhances his already-proven talent as a storyteller; he's able to write convincingly about computers, bringing computer expertise to a medium whose knowledge about technology is often sorely lacking.

Tom Sutton and Mark Buckingham share the art honors on ***The Hacker Files***; it's a good combination, because Buckingham adds a hard edge to Sutton's very fluid artwork. It's a combination that seems just as well-suited for a high-tech book like this as Sutton's solo work is suited for surreal occult fantasy. Together, Sutton and Buckingham are much more effective than either could have been alone.

One of the things that pleased me most visually about ***The Hacker Files*** *was the look of Jack Marshall; recently, a mother of three young children who are all comics collectors spoke to me about the appearance of characters in comics--she felt that comics characters left impressions that were unhealthy strictly due to their seemingly perfect examples of the human figure-- and in many ways she was right. That's what I like about Jack Marshall, not only does he have the abilities of a human, but he has the physique as well; Jack Marshall could easily be your neighbor or the average man-on-the-street. This book is loaded with unusual appeal that derives from a number of wonderful locations. I can't recommend it highly enough.*

The Hacker Files #1 is a top-notch, suspenseful story that will, I suspect, inspire imitation; it deserves the same sort of reader loyalty as equally sophisticated books like ***Sandman*** and ***Hellblazer.***

Be here for more reviews next week!

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QUICKSHOTS

The Best-Laid Plans...

Eclipse is playing catch-up with several of its late projects; this November, the publisher will release a pair of books originally scheduled for publication earlier this year. **Fly In My Eye Exposed,** the fourth volume of the **Fly In My Eye** horror anthology series, is a $12.95 trade paperback featuring work by *Michael Zulli, Matt Howarth, Rick Geary, J.K. Potter,* and more; it was originally scheduled for May publication. **Larry Marder's Beanworld Volume Two**, a 104-page collection originally announced last February, reprints **Tales From the Beanworld #5-7**, will be published in a $9.95 trade paperback and a $32.95 signed and numbered hardcover (and, as with the first volume, Marder will add an individualized sketch to each hardcover).

His Job Isn't Just a Walk In the Park

Dzhon, the hero of the new six-issue limited series **Warpwalking,** has to make some major sacrifices before he can become the manufactured messiah who will merge humans and dæmons into one race. First off, this halfbreed street kid is transformed into a eunuch... But in return for his sacrifice, he is given immense powers and other gifts and sent into the world to help the victorious dæmons acculturate human beings. After thirty years of war, though, there are human forces bitterly opposed to such a merger--and even Dzhon isn't sure it's a great idea. Once Dzhon discovers the esoteric art of warpwalking, traveling through dimensions uncharted, then neither the dæmons nor the humans can predict what will happen next. **Warpwalking #1**, a $2.95 black-and-white comic, is scheduled for November release.

Batman Returns Hooks More Stars

Batman Returns, currently film under *Tim Burton*'s direction in Los Angeles, has announced the addition of four new cast members, including *Jan Hooks,* former **Saturday Night Live** cast member who is currently seen on **Designing Women.** Hooks worked with Tim Burton previously on **Pee-Wee's Big Adventure**. *Cristi Conway, Steve Witting,* and *Andrew Bryniarski* have also joined the cast of the film, which is scheduled for spring 1992 release. **Batman Returns** is written by *Dan Waters* and *Wesley Strick,* and stars *Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito,* and *Michelle Pfeiffer.*

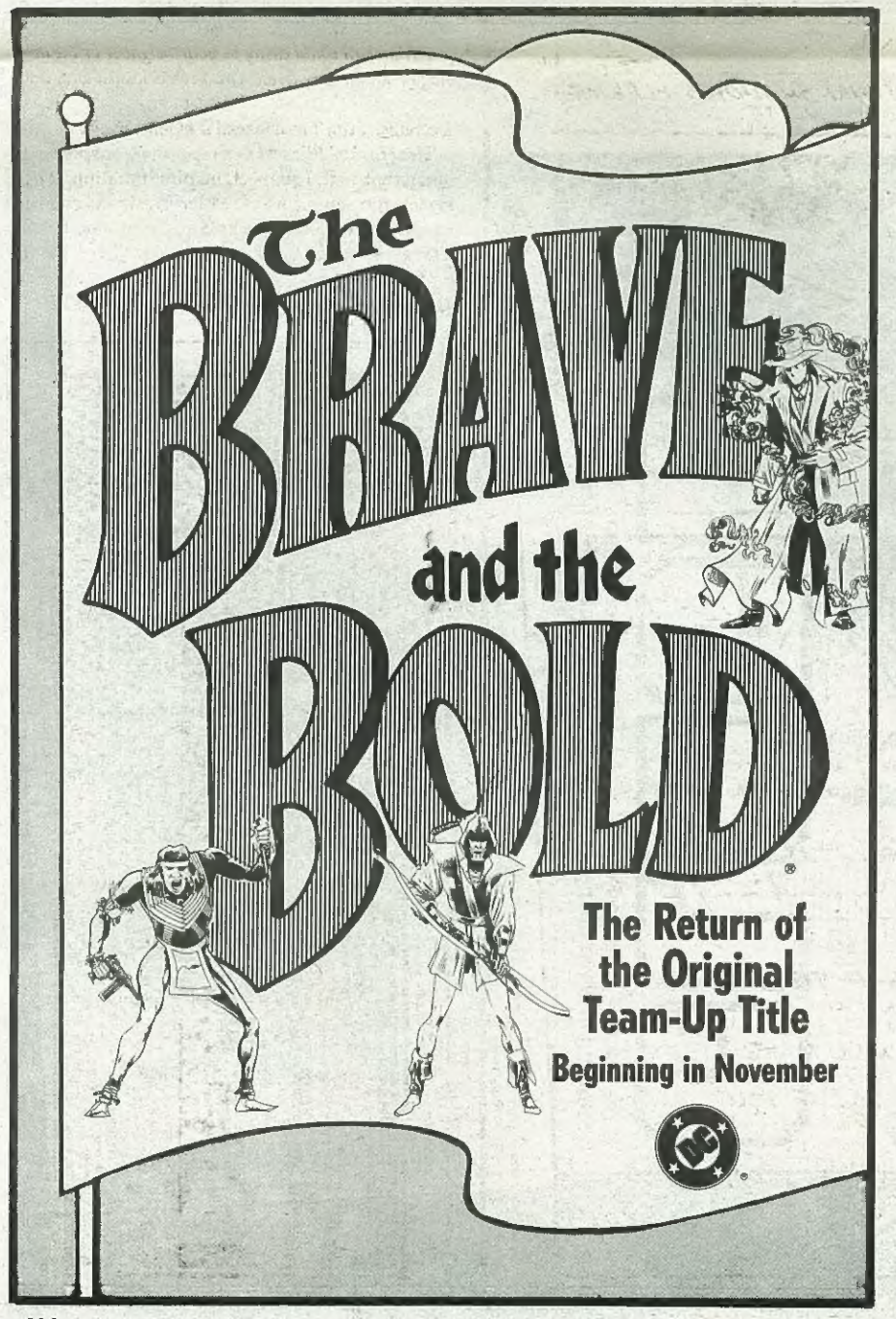
If You Thought Lobo Was Tough...

Simon Bisley has become a fan-favorite in America largely because of his work on Lobo; savvy fans know, however, that he has also illustrated a three-volume series featuring tough-guy barbarian hero **Slaine**. In December, SQP will be offering a Simon Bisley limited edition **Slaine poster. The Slaine Poster**, a 17" x 24" full-color poster printed on heavy coated stock, is priced at $6.95; reserve one with your local comic shop ASAP if you don't want to miss out!

Kurtzman Offers Insightful History

Harvey Kurtzman has made comics history since the early 1950's; later this year, he'll write about comics history in **From Aargh! to Zap!: Harvey Kurtzman's Visual History of the Comics.** The oversized book, packed with over 400 illustrations, offers Kurtzman's opinionated look at the medium and the creators who have made it so memorable over the years. The text is written by Kurtzman along with comics historian *Mike Barrier;* it features a four-color chronology of comics from 1938 to 1990. According to Kurtzman in his introduction to the book, "Much of the material herein is culled from personal memories, from working with some of the best artists in the business. I've also visited the studios of other artists, interrupting their work to ask about their lives and working methods. Many even stopped and responded, probably in an attempt to get rid of the weirdo with the notebook..."

From Aargh! to Zap! will be available in a standard-format hardcover from Prentice Hall later this year; however, for the collector who can't pass up a high-quality limited edition, Kitchen Sink Press is offering a deluxe signed limited hardcover, featuring a specially illustrated tip-in plate and special endpapers, for $49.95. As with all special editions of this sort, be sure to let your local comic shop know that you're interested--and tell 'em that **CSN** sent you!...



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